

SCOPULA NIGROPUNCTATA HUFNAGEL:
SUB-ANGLED WAVE IN SUSSEX

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Restricted to Kent and Sussex, there have been only three singleton records of this insect from the latter county – at Hastings in 1876, at Milton Street in 1970 (Pratt, 1981), and at Ninfield in 1983 (Parsons, 1984). However, after the night of August 6th 1984 a male was found at rest near a Robinson m.v. trap in East Sussex by C. Robinson. Although no further examples were noted at this precise spot, despite continuous trapping, a very short distance away specimens were noted by the writer at light on August 17th, 18th (3), 19th and 20th, indicating the presence of a breeding colony. The first moths observed were in reasonable condition, the later ones worn. The species flew early, most being seen before 10 pm BST with none noted after 11 pm; they still flew with a cool ground temperature of 10 degrees Centigrade. No females were seen.

The insect was distributed along more than half a mile of a flowery east/west ride situated within a beech and pine plantation, the ride varying in width from 8 to 20 yards; the moth was very local and seemingly preferred a small bank of broken chalk – none could be found in rides, or parts of rides, which did not support numbers of varied flowers.

I understand that the foodplant of feral *nigropunctata* has never been unquestionably determined in this county. *Clematis* in England, and *Viola*, *Veronica*, *Vicia*, *Origanum*, and *Stachys* abroad, have been mentioned in the distant past (Barrett, 1902); Tormentil has also been associated with the insect (Chalmers-Hunt, 1960). All of these plant families are well represented within a mile of the site, including Tormentil, and most close by (Hall, 1980). Nevertheless, examination of the dozen most frequent low-growing plants existing where the insect actually flew revealed that only one plant belonged to those families previously mentioned as having supported the moth in parts of Europe – *Vicia tetrasperma* (L.) Schreb., the Smooth Tare.

References

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